



The First Printing in  
Nova Scotia



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THE FIRST PRINTING IN  
NOVA SCOTIA





# The First Printing in Nova Scotia

BY

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## The First Printing in Nova Scotia



PRINTING in Nova Scotia traces its ancestry in a direct line from the first press to be established in the English-speaking portion of North America. For the man who first brought press and type to Halifax was Bartholomew Green, of Boston, son of Bartholomew Green who printed Boston's first newspaper, the *News-Letter*, and grandson of Samuel Green, who succeeded Stephen and Matthew Daye (or Day) in the operation of the pioneer press at Harvard College, in Cambridge, which did its first printing in 1639. Bartholomew Green the younger was in partnership in Boston with two other printers, John Bushell and Bezoune Allen, for a number of years until 1751.

In that year, for some reason, Green, although no longer a young man and apt for pioneering, decided to remove to the new settlement at Halifax. He arrived there in September, 1751, with his press and types. It was apparently his intention to establish a newspaper, but he died a few weeks after his arrival. While it is possible that he had his press in operation shortly after he reached Halifax, there is no evidence that he printed anything there before he died. Nevertheless, to Bar-

tholomew Green, junior, belongs the credit of bringing printing to Nova Scotia, and in fact—of bringing the first press to Canadian soil.

It would appear that Green's adventuring into a new field was a partnership affair rather than a personal enterprise. For although he had two sons who were trained as printers, it was not his sons but his partner, John Bushell, who succeeded to whatever business Green had established at Halifax. And it was John Bushell who, according to all available evidence, was the first man actually to print there. After some delay, the reason for which does not appear, Bushell, on Monday, March 23rd, 1752, issued the first number of Nova Scotia's first newspaper, the *Halifax Gazette*. This was also the first newspaper published in what is now the Dominion of Canada.

The imprint of this first paper reads: "Halifax: Printed by John Bushell, at the Printing-Office in Grafton-Street, where Advertisements are taken in, 1752." In his salutatory the publisher introduces his enterprise as follows: "As many of the subscribers to the Proposals for publishing of this Paper, may be desirous of knowing the Cause why it hath been so long delayed, the Printer begs Leave to inform them, That the Gentleman who is possess'd of the original Subscriptions, whenever desired, will give them a satisfactory Account. And as the Letter-Press is now commodiously fixed for the Printing Business, all such Gentlemen, Merchants, and others, as may have Occasion for any Thing in that Way, may depend upon



being served in a reasonable and expeditious Manner, by their Most Obedient, Humble Servant, John Bushell."

The first issue contains three advertisements, including that of "Leigh and Wragg," two gentlemen who offer to teach "Spelling, Reading, Writing in all it's different Hands; Arithmatic, in all it's Parts; Merchants Accompts, or, the true Italian Method of Book-keeping in a new and concise Manner: Likewise all Parts of the Mathematics." The remainder of the four columns is taken up with such news of the world as the publisher had been able to gather and condense into that limited space, including a few items eight or ten months old. Among them is the following: "On the 13th of May last, an Act passed for regulating the Commencement of the Year, and for correcting the Kalender now in Use; to extend throughout all his Majesty's Dominions. (The Particulars of which will be published in our next.)"

This little paper, printed on both sides of a half-sheet of foolscap, aimed to serve the needs of a little settlement not yet three years old. In fact, Halifax at the time was little more than a garrison for a few troops; it is hard to see what possibilities either Green or Bushell could discover in it as a field for a newspaper or for any other printing enterprise. But in spite of unpromising conditions the little newspaper remained alive, even if it did not flourish.

John Bushell, however, did not depend entirely upon the *Gazette* as his means of support. He also



NOVA-SCOTIA No. 1.

THE

HALIFAX GAZETTE.



MONDAY, March 23. 1752.

**A**S many of the Subscribers to the Proposals for publishing of this PAPER, may be desirous of knowing the Cause why it hath been *so long delayed*; the Printer begs Leave to inform them, *That the Gentleman who is possessor of the original Subscriptions, whenever desired, will give them a satisfactory Account.* And as the Letter-Press is now commodiously fixed for the Printing Business; all such Gentlemen, Merchants, and others, as may have Occasion for any Thing in that Way, may depend upon being served in a reasonable and expeditious Manner, by their

*Most Obedient*

*Humble Servant,*

John Bushell.

*By the last Papers, &c. from London, by the Way of Boston, we have the following Intelligence, viz.*

FOREIGN ADVICES.

R O M E, September 24.

**A** Few Days ago, as the Pope was going in his Coach to the Quirinal, an ordinary man knelt in the Street upon his Knees as if he wanted to receive a Blessing from him, which as he was going to

go to last twice as long. Secondly, Will save Numbers of Seamen, as well as preserve the Cargoes. Thirdly, All such Ships, that make use of it, require but little Ballast, so consequents, will hold more Tonnage. Fourthly, The Ship will answer the Helm much better, and will sail faster by four Knots in an Hour, &c. &c. &c.

Nov. 13. Last Sunday Night died, in the 78th Year of his Age, that great Mechanic Mr. George Graham, F. R. S. &c. &c. &c. He was maker in Fleet-street, who may truly be said to have been the Father of the Trade, not only with Regard to the Perfection to which he brought Clocks and Watches, but for his great Encouragement to all Artificers employ'd under him, by keeping up the Spirit of Emulation among them.

Nov. 19. Last Week happened a very melancholy Accident, which, we hear, is as follows, viz. Mr. Dobay, Confectioner to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, in Notts street, in the Hay-Market, being on Friday Evening at a Tavern near Pall Mall, with an eminent City mist, who was his intimate Friend and Neighbour, of a sudden complain'd of a violent Pain in his Side, which he frequently labour'd under; his Friend endeavour'd to persuade him, that he would soon get the better of it, if he would go immediately to Bed, and take in the Morning a Dose of Physick that he would send him for that Purpose, accordingly the Drought had its desired Effect; and on Saturday Morning about Eight o'Clock, he was seemingly quite recovered, and at his own Door. His Friend, who was glad to find him so much better when he came in the Morning, thought it advisable to order him a second Dose, which one of his Servants being left to prepare, (and at the same Time several Chells of Medicines being packing in the Shop for Exportation) by some unhappy Mistake, a Phial containing a Liquid of a poisonous Nature, was sent instead; which, on the Patient's swallowing, he was

the Concerns, to take more Care for the future of the unhappy People committed to their Charge.

*Janer. OZa. 7.* They write from Constantinople, That the Inhabitants who retired into the Country to avoid the Plague, are far from being secure, as the Air is infected for twenty Leagues round.

## FROM THE BRITISH PRINTS.

L O N D O N, *Saturday 18.*

This Day came on the Election for Lord Mayor of this City, when Thomas Winterbottom, Esq; Alderman of Billingsgate Ward was elected for the Year ensuing. At the same Time, Singhsy Babel and Marth Dickenson, Esqs; were chosen into the Office of Sheriff for the Year ensuing.

On the 13th of May last, an Act passed for regulating the Commerce of the Year, and for correcting the Calendar now in Use; to extend throughout all his Majesty's Dominions. [The particulars of which will be published in our next.]

On the 14th of June, two Bills passed the Hon. House of Commons, which have since obtain'd the Royal Assent, viz. One for continuing the Bounty on the Importation of Malts, Tar, &c. The other for encouraging the making of Poulches and Pearldrums in America. And on the 25th of the same Month, his Majesty closed his most gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, as follows, viz.

“ My Lords and Gentlemen,

“ *66* I Have nothing to desire of you, but *affectionally to consult your*  
“ *is maintain in your several Camerits, the publick Peace and good Or-*  
“ *der; to encourage and promote a just Reverence for Government and*  
“ *Law, and not to suffer their good Laws, which are enacted here, to*  
“ *lose their Effect for want of a due Execution.”*

His Majesty has been pleas'd to require and command, that all Vessels arriving from the Levant should perform Quarantine.

*November 2.* We hear that a Report has been sent up by his Majesty's Officers at Portsmouth, to the Hon. the Commissioners of the Navy, and by them to the Lords of the Admiralty, of the Success of the Experiment made by Mr. George Bridges, on several Pieces of Planks, to prevent Worms eating Holes in Ships Bottoms; the Advantage that will accrue to his Majesty's Dominions, are many; First, it will save the Expence of Sheathing, and cause the

a terrace at Lion Hill, the Seat of the Right Hon. the Earl of Northumberland, about ten feet from the Surface under the Walls, they found twenty-seven human Skulls, one of them of a most enormous Size, with the Teeth all fix'd and found in the jaws of them all; and seven Barrels fill'd with humane Bones; which are supposed to have been there some Ages.

*Nov. 30.* On Thursday Night, about Ten o'Clock, as a Gentleman, who had been drinking pretty freely with some friends, was going thro' Holborn, and seeing a Mob, his Curiosity led him to enquire into the Cause of it, which he unfortunately mistook to be a Treatment too severely inflicted by them upon an Apprentice, for using too much Liberty with his Tongue. The Gentleman taking Compassion of the young Man, very officiously interpos'd his Endeavours to appease the exasperated Mob, and to rescue the Offender, which at length, by pressing Influences and much good Speeches, he accomplish'd; and it had been lucky for him if his Generosity had ended there; but not contented with having rescued him, he afterwards took him to a publick House to refresh him, where being in a private Room, and before a great Fire, the Gentleman fell asleep. In the mean Time, the suppos'd Apprentice pick'd his Pocket of Eighteen Shillings, and these new Silk Handkerchiefs, stipp'd him of his Hat and Cane, and made clearly off. As this ungrateful Behaviour verifis the old Proverb, *Says a Thief from his Gallows, as I left cut your Throat, it is happy it will be a Warning to Gentlemen, not to thrust themselves rashly into Mobs, where, though their Purses escape, they seldom come off without some Damage.*

*Dec. 31.* According to private Advices from Paris, the Commissioners that have been so long conferring together in that City, about a new Regulation of Lingos in America, have already made to surprizing a Progress, that the Publick in general bests to be persuaded the Affair will ere long be brought to a happy, tho' not a surprising Conclusion.

*Jan. 1.* Yesterday was held a Board of Trade, when James Oswald, Esq; took his Seat accordingly; at the first Time the several Dispatches brought by Commodore Anse and Capt. Hutchinson concerning Nova-Scotia were laid before them.

The same Day ----- Cornwallis, Esq; was appointed an Agent for that Colony.

*Jan. 2.* They write from Copenhagen, That, on the Occasion of the Death of the Queen of Denmark, his Danish Majesty has issued an Edict, forbidding for a whole Year all Plays, Balling, Operas, Comedies, &c. ----- *It is now proposed in France, that a new law should send at least one half of our poor, & idle Gentry to the Galleys.*



printed for the government of Nova Scotia. The earliest specimen of this official printing which is now known is a pamphlet of six printed pages containing "An Act for the Relief of Debtors, with Respect to the Imprisonment of their Persons." This Act is dated December 6th, 1752, and was probably printed not long thereafter. The only known copy of it is that which is preserved in the library of Acadia University, at Wolfville, Nova Scotia. It is an excellent piece of work typographically and shows that it comes from the hands of a craftsman of more than mediocre skill.

After nine years of pioneering in Halifax, John Bushell died in February, 1761, leaving a son and a daughter, both of whom were trained to the printing trade. Of the father, Isaiah Thomas, in his *History of Printing in America*, says, "He was a good workman, but had not the art of acquiring property; nor did he make the most economical use of the little which fell into his hands."

The next printer to work in Halifax was Anton Heinrich, a German by birth, who had had some training at the printing craft in his native land. According to Thomas, he came to America with a British regiment in which he had enlisted, and on his discharge in the new land, in 1758, worked for a time at the printing trade with James Parker, New Jersey's first printer, at Woodbridge. Just when it was that he found his way to Halifax is not known, but he seems to have been associated with Bushell there and to have succeeded to the latter's business. Under the English form



At a Council holden at *Halifax*, on Wednesday the 6th of *December* 1752, It was enacted as follows.



A N

## A C T

For the Relief of *Debtors*, with Respect to the Imprisonment of their *Persons*.

**W**HEREAS there are divers unhappy Person, who have been for some Time past confined, and are now detained in His Majesty's Goal in this Place for Debt, for whose Maintenance, by their Creditors or otherwise, no Provision is made by any Act of the Legislature of this Province; By Reason whereof the said Prisoners are wholly depending upon the Charity of Compassionate Person for the Support of Life, and may be reduced to great Distress, contrary to the Intention of the Law in regard to Prisoners for Debt.

Preamble,

**B**E it therefore enacted by His Excellency the Governor, by and with the Advice and Consent of His Majesty's Council of this Province, and by the Authority of the same, That if any Person or Persons now charged, or who shall or may hereafter be charged in Execution, for any Sum or Sums of Money, that from

Persons charged in Execution to exhibit a Petition to the Court.

A

and

of his name, as Anthony Henry, he remained in the printing business at Halifax for nearly forty years, until his death in December, 1800.

At first, it seems, Henry's printing was not successful. He carried on the *Gazette* and did the government printing, but did so unsatisfactorily. No specimens of Henry's earlier work at Halifax are extant, but the testimony of Isaiah Thomas, who worked under him, is that it was "badly executed," and that Henry himself was "indolent, and inattentive to his affairs."

Whether or not it was because the government of Nova Scotia was displeased with Henry's service as a printer, and therefore encouraged another craftsman to come to the colony, in 1766 Robert Fletcher arrived at Halifax from London "with a new and good apparatus," and was given the government's printing. On August 15th, 1766, Fletcher issued the first number of the second newspaper in Nova Scotia, the *Nova Scotia Gazette*. Henry continued his business, apparently undiscouraged by competition. He seems to have kept on with his own newspaper, eventually changing the name of it, however, to the *Nova Scotia Chronicle* and enlarging it to eight pages. It was Fletcher, and not Henry, who finally decided that there was one printer too many in Halifax. In 1770 the Englishman disposed of his equipment—sending it to Boston for sale, according to Thomas—and returned to England.

Once more the good-natured German had the Halifax printing field to himself. His newspaper absorbed

A  
CHARGE  
DELIVERED TO THE  
CLERGY  
OF THE  
*Province of QUEBEC,*  
AT THE  
PRIMARY VISITATION  
HOLDEN IN THE CITY OF QUEBEC,  
IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST 1789.

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BY  
THE RIGHT REVEREND CHARLES,  
*BISHOP of NOVA SCOTIA.*

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*HALIFAX:*

Printed by ANTHONY HENRY; Printer to the King's  
Most Excellent Majesty

*MDCCCLXC.*

An Imprint from the Press of Anthony Henry.  
[Reproduced actual size]

its former competitor and thereafter appeared as the *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, with the royal arms in the title. What is more, the quality of his printing had much improved under the stimulus of rivalry.

The Revolutionary disturbances of 1776, and especially the evacuation of Boston by the British troops in March of that year, sent a number of staunch Boston Loyalists in search of new homes. Among these early refugees from the Revolution was Margaret Draper, the proprietor of the *Boston News-Letter*, who, with presses and types, and accompanied by a young printer named John Howe, removed from disaffected Massachusetts to loyal Nova Scotia. There is no extant evidence that I know of at present of the activities of this press, if indeed there were any, before 1781. In January of that year, however, John Howe is credited with the establishment of the *Halifax Journal*, a newspaper that lived for ninety years. In 1789, Howe began the publication of the *Nova Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review of Literature, Politics and News*, an 80-page monthly which flourished for two years or so on the patronage of the large Loyalist population which had come to Nova Scotia a few years before from Massachusetts and other colonies.

Meanwhile, Anthony Henry by no means succumbed to competition. He became "Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty" and so continued until his death in 1800. There is evidence, also, that he imported some German types and did some printing



in that language over his original name, Anton Heinrich. He is even credited by Thomas, the historian, with the publication of a German newspaper at Halifax, with the aid of Henry Steiner, a fellow German, as his journeyman.

John Howe, in partnership with his more famous son Joseph, under the firm name of John Howe and Son, became the government printers soon after the death of Anthony Henry. The imprint of John Howe and Son is found on government documents as late as 1835, when the elder Howe died. The son, Joseph Howe, lived to become a figure of great importance in the journalism, statesmanship, and history not only of Nova Scotia, but also of Canada.





